

"CONFIDENT ASSURANCE"

(Discourse by R. H. Barber, 1915 Convention Report, Supplement, starting on Page 29.)

The general topic of the day is confident assurance, and we wish to keep this thought before our minds in speaking to you this morning. In looking over the program, I wondered which of the topics was of most importance. I could come to no decision. The one we have for today is surely of great importance--CONFIDENT ASSURANCE

What is meant by confident assurance? We understand that to be sure of anything would be to have a belief in it, based upon certain indisputable evidence--that is, evidence that would appeal to the mind as indisputable. It would mean that one would have no doubt in his mind. With respect to the great Divine Plan, it would mean to believe in the Heavenly Father as the God who is good, the God who is love; it would mean to believe that the Bible is His Word, and that its statements are true. Therefore, we could have confident assurance.

This morning I wish to bring to your attention some features of the divine plan, and I will use as a text Isa. 30:15: "For thus saith the Lord, the Holy One of Israel; in returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." It seems to me that the very essence of confident assurance is expressed in this text. It pictures us all as once wandering away from the Lord; as a ship without a rudder. It tells us that in returning and rest shall we be saved. Here we have the thought of confident assurance in rest. We understand the rest here referred to is not physical rest, although we believe this rest does contribute to physical rest. To our understanding it is the rest referred to in Heb. 3. It is the rest of faith. In returning to God, and being filled with a realization of this great plan of salvation, we have been enabled to look forward in confident assurance to the time when that plan will be completed. When sin entered Eden, and seemed to interfere with God's arrangements, He rested, and He is still resting in confident assurance. You and I have the privilege of entering His rest. In returning and rest shall we be saved. I am reminded of the Psalmist's words in Psalm 37:7, "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him." I fear some of us have been waiting a little impatiently. I have had some of the friends tell me that they were very much disappointed that they are not in the kingdom. I tell them the fact that they are disappointed in the matter is positive proof that they were not ready for the kingdom. We want to get to the point where we will say, "Thy will be done." That is the rest of faith which says, "God has not taken us into the kingdom, therefore it must not be the proper time yet. We will wait, in quietness and assurance, God's due time." It seems to me, if we do not feel that way, it would indicate a lack of this full assurance; it would indicate that we are not just ready. Perhaps God saw that we needed a little more time.

"In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." This strength is of a peculiar character. It is in quietness and confidence. If you and I were to pick out those who we feel would stand the tests and trials of the present time, I feel sure we would select some who are strong and robust physically; some who have much of self-reliance, and possibly some of the spirit of boastfulness. We would say, "These will stand." I have seen some of that character in the past, who are not standing with us at this time. On the contrary, I have seen some timid ones, armed with God's strength, who after long years are still loyal, and give every indication that they will remain loyal to the end. The Lord can provide the needed strength, and He tells us it will be manifested in quietness and confidence. The Lord is seeking such a class as this, who will conquer in the Lord's strength, and not in their own. These will not only not be relying on self, but they will be relying on the Lord.

At the same time, they will be courageous. This goes hand in hand with courage. Some of the most courageous characters are those who had not much courage naturally. The Lord will endue with courage to meet the trials if we have dependence upon Him. He will give such strength as He gave to the martyrs of the past. In reading of the experiences of those loyal ones of the past, we were surprised to read of a boy of twelve who went to the stake without a murmur, without a word of protest. It reminds me of the Lord, who was "led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth." We find the record of timid sisters in the past who were burned at the stake, or thrown to the lions, without a murmur or complaint. They were armed with the strength that God supplies. They had confident assurance, not in themselves, but in His grace. They believed that all things would work together for good to them that love God. They held to that promise, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Having this assurance, we can trust ourselves in His hands; secondly, there could be no complaining or murmuring. I hear many complaining and faultfinding about the Lord's providences. I fear sometimes that we indulge in this. I think to some extent all of us are prone to do this. If so, we have not reached this condition of full confidence, or reliance upon the Heavenly Father. If we had, there would be none of this.

The Apostle Paul tells in 2 Cor. 12:9, of his own experiences in this connection. You remember he had a physical disability. You and I, too, have physical disabilities of certain kinds. He prayed the Lord that this disability might be removed. I have no idea that this prayer was a selfish one. My thought is not that he wanted to be a more handsome man so that he might present the message in a more forceful and impressive manner, to bring attention to himself. I believe he desired to serve the Lord better, and for this reason he offered this prayer. The Lord gave him a wonderful lesson. He said, "Paul, my grace is sufficient for you." These humbling experiences that you are having are intended to be for your eternal good. "My grace is sufficient; my strength is made

perfect in weakness." Think of this. The Lord is taking the weak, physically, and some who are weak in other respects--those who are naturally of a shrinking disposition, and He is supplying these with strength. They receive from Him strength, which gives them confident assurance, and they can rely upon the Lord.

"My strength is made perfect in weakness." What an encouragement this should be, if we do not feel that we have much of physical strength, or self-reliance. Many of the friends have little of self-reliance. When the door of opportunity for service opens they shrink back, feeling their own inherent weakness. The Lord can use these gloriously in the carrying out of His purpose, sometimes rebuking those who have more of physical strength, and self-reliance. We have read instances where the Lord strengthened and used such in a wonderful way. It has been strengthening to me to read some of these instances.

God supplies this strength through the word of truth, through providential leadings, and experiences in connection with their own lives. Sometimes I think we fail to take note of the providential experiences as we should. Little things befall us day by day, and they come in such a matter-of-fact way, that we are apt to think they came by chance--that they are simply accidents, whereas the Bible tells us plainly that everything that befalls the Lord's people is permitted by Him. These experiences are overruled by Him. These experiences are designed of the Lord to work out the good pleasure of His will in our hearts. Sometimes He opens opportunities of service to us, that we may see His hand in the matter, and thus gain confidence and strength, that we may be better armed to do His will in the future.

This is what furnishes us material for testimonials. The reason why testimonies sometimes drag is that we have failed to note these providences. If we can go through seven days, from one week to another, without having some blessings of experiences to strengthen and encourage us, we had better get down on our knees and ask for grace and wisdom--perception, so we may see His hand in our affairs.

The Lord strengthens us through His Word. The Psalmist says, "Jehovah is the strength of my life; of whom should I be afraid?" I am reminded here of Matt. 10:28 in this connection. You remember the Scriptures give us the thought that having been begotten of the spirit the earthly body is simply the residence, the abode, of the new creature. The new creature is the I, and the old fleshly body is counted dead. The Lord says, "Fear not them who are able to destroy the body and after that have no more that they can do, but, rather, fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body (the body and the new creature, the life.) We see the force of this. Of whom should we be afraid--those who destroy the body, and after this have no more than they can do? No, fear, rather, Him

who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna.

In Isa. 28:5, 6, we have a text referring to the present time, and I think it is specifically applicable to the time just in the future--"In that day shall Jehovah of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty unto the residue of His people, and for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate." It represents the Lord's people fighting against the foe. Jehovah of hosts shall be their strength.

The prophet in Isa. 40:31 says, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." That is why some of us are weak. What does waiting on the Lord mean? Sometimes I think we give this a restricted, very limited meaning. We think it means getting down on our knees twice a day in prayer. We grant that means waiting on the Lord, but we believe it is only a small portion of the waiting on the Lord, though a necessary portion. Waiting on the Lord would mean to give heed to His instructions. It would mean to search the Scriptures. I believe many are failing along this line, and I have noted it particularly during the past twelve months. I remember reading a letter in which it was said that the writer could see no evidence of lack of diligence among the Lord's people. I must confess that my experience is the opposite. I see a lack of zeal. Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength--those who give heed to His instructions.

The Lord says, "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together." Some are neglecting this. Another is, "Study to show thyself approved unto God." Some are neglecting that. I find some are not keeping up their study of the Volumes. Some have deserted the Volumes, thinking they possibly get misinformation there, hence they are studying the Bible for themselves--what our ancestors have been doing for hundreds of years without getting very much out of it. I believe that the Bible is given to be studied, but I also believe that the Lord has kept much of it hidden until the due time. At the due time He gives us the understanding through His agencies, and we cannot get instruction in any other way. It is best to follow the leadings of the Heavenly Father. We want to take the Bible, and study it with the helps the Lord has given us. That is the way to search the Scriptures.

Some who have lost confidence in the Volumes, and decline to use them further, go direct to the Scriptures, taking such helps as Young's and Strong's Concordance, not seeing the nonsense of rejecting the one and taking the other. They repudiate the most important aid, from which we have received the greatest help. All of these helps should be used, so far as they will assist us in understanding the Father's Word.

If we wish to wait on the Lord it will mean watchfulness, prayerfulness, thoughtfulness.

Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching. This is included in waiting on the Lord. "They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength." If we find that we are losing faith, strength, confidence, full assurance, what does it mean? It is an indication that we are not waiting upon the Lord properly.

In Deut. 33:25 we read, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." I think we may properly say this text may be understood to refer to physical strength. If the Lord has some work for us to do, He will grant strength to do it. If you keep yourself in the Love of God He will supply strength in every trial, so you go through it to His honor and glory, and come off a victor. All of this depends upon our fulfilling the instruction given in the Word of Truth. We must wait on the Lord. If we go to the Word, depending on self-confidence, we are not waiting on the Lord. He will not then supply the strength. "As thy days, so shall thy strength be."

The Bible, seemingly, calls attention to the fact that the harvest of the age, the end, would bring the very hardest part of the trial. I think our trials will be more severe than any past trials of faith. I understand that every trial, in the last analysis, simmers down to a trial of faith. The Apostle in 1 Pet. 4:12, 13, says: "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial (there is to be a fiery trial)." If you have not had any fiery trial, there is such in store for you somewhere. If you murmur, and complain, and find fault, it means that you think it strange that the Lord would treat you in that way, does it not? It indicates that you have not learned your lesson as you should. You have not put the armor on as you should. You have not come to the point where, in quietness and confidence, you have strength. "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you, but rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings." We promised the Lord in our consecration that we would be partakers of His sufferings. Are you able to have part in His baptism? We said we are able. When we complain in any trial, we are not in harmony with this text. "Rejoice, that when His glory is revealed ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

At the present time our sufferings may not be conducive to physical joy. Sufferings come to us as human beings; not so much as new creatures. The apostle says, "Christ suffered in the flesh; arm yourselves also with the same mind." If they burn you at the stake, it is the flesh that they burn. When they tell you something that hurts your pride, it is the flesh that is hurt. The tears may roll down your cheeks, the sobs may escape us, the pain may be truly severe, yet the new creature is rejoicing that it is counted worthy to suffer with Christ. We want to rejoice, that when His glory is revealed we may be glad.

In 2 Peter 2:1, 2 is a text which I think refers quite specifically to our time. The apostle

there says, "There were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you." He is pointing to our day. Personally I believe it is a little further on. These shall "privily bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them. Many shall follow their pernicious ways." Have we had that experience? Yes, we have had the bringing in of false doctrines, Those who have gone out from us have not been a great number yet. This passage declares that "Many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the truth shall be evil spoken of." It is evil spoken of now to an extent, but it is by the public principally. This text intimates that some will speak evil of the truth who have gone out of the truth.

In Heb. 10:32, 33, we read of some who "endured a great fight of afflictions (after they had been illuminated) partly whilst they were made a gazing stock, both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly whilst they became companions of them that were so used." I interpreted it in this way: in some of the ecclesias there are some who are not highly educated, some who have lacks of various ways, and reproach may come in that way. However, I believe there is a different thought in this respect. I believe the reproaches will be against our dear pastor. The reproaches will be against him, and they will come upon us because we are associated with him. In our home communities, there is not so much reproach from the world against our religious belief. If I go quietly to your neighborhood and inquire about you, they might say, 'Oh, he is a good fellow, he is a good man; he pays his debts, he is a good neighbor, and minds his own business, but he has a queer religion.' The reproach brought against us in that way would not have a serious effect, because the neighbors know of our manner of life. But some of these matters brought against our pastor will be proven, to some extent, and people will say, "Are you following such a man?" It will take some confident assurance about that time. When we cannot defend the character of our pastor, we can say, "I do not believe it." Then they will sneer at us, and there will be a severe trial. I can not think of one much more severe than that. There will be some who have had the truth, furnishing the evidence for all of this reproach. The world will say, "We have it from their own lips," as it were; "from those who walked with you." Such things have occurred in the past, and they may occur in the future. If any one on earth could tell you a story about our pastor, or any one else, among the Lord's people, and you would believe it, let me tell you that if you had lived 1900 years ago you would have believed the things they told about Jesus. We have found some friends in this condition. I have talked until past midnight to some who have been thinking along this line. Some think everything is going on smoothly. It is in some places, but not everywhere.

Every man's work shall be made manifest. What kind of work? The faith structure that we are building on the truth. I have found some who had newspaper clippings, and wanted me to swear to them. They had not built up their character on the truth. They had

not seen the truth in such a wonderful way. It had not appealed to them that if our dear pastor has been used to bring this truth to us in such a beautiful way, nothing on earth should shake our confidence in him. If we lose confidence in the representatives of the Heavenly Father, we have lost confidence in the Heavenly Father. The day shall declare our work, of what sort it is. "Every man's work shall be made manifest." Do not think that you will escape. Judgment has begun at the house of God. He is now sifting out, judging, condemning, eliminating everything not fit for the kingdom.

Psalm 91:7 gives us a thought which I cannot think is fulfilled yet--not completely, anyhow. "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand." We have interpreted this in the past as being applicable to the nominal systems going into evolution, Christian Science, etc. But it seems to me this comes home to God's consecrated saints, who are walking with us, and believing the things that we believe possibly. "It shall not come nigh thee"--those keeping themselves in the love of God faithfully, Here is a text we should take confidence from. Many see the text, "A thousand shall fall," and wonder whether we will be among the falling ones. Notice the next verse: "It shall not come nigh thee." Let us always remember that God has made certain provision whereby we remain His children; whereby everything shall work together for good to us. The provision is, that we keep ourselves in the love of God. Keep your thoughts on Heavenly things, and full of faith. Pay no heed to the distractions of Satan. Pay attention to the truth, as the Father is giving it to us at the present time. Keep girding on the armor.

I think some forget that when we have the knowledge of the truth we may lose it. Consequently they get careless along the lines of study. The knowledge very soon slips away. Some texts may be very familiar to you, yet, after a few weeks or months you cannot quote them. A few years ago in the Pilgrim service, I had several different talks which I gave several times, and in these I used some texts many times. After a time I changed my talks, and to my astonishment, after I had not used them for a few months, I would have to go to my Bible and read them. Our minds are like leaky vessels. We must not think that we have the armor on--we must keep girding it on, and polishing the armor.

In Rev. 3:10, we have another text to consider "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." I think all of the harvest of the age is a time of trial, but I believe it will culminate in a climax a little like we have been looking for and expecting--greater trials. The Bible tells us it is a trial of faith. "The trial of your faith, being more precious than that of gold that perisheth."

Jude 17 and 18 says, "But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of

the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts." Notice, these mockers are walking after their own desires, following their own fleshly desires and cravings. I understand this to be a class associated with the church, in the ecclesias. These are self-willed, walking after their own desires. Some seek to domineer in the class, not being willing to submit to the vote of the class, according to order and discipline. Jude describes this class as those who despise rule and dominion. They speak evil of the elders, and they speak evil of the pilgrims, who are also elders at large, and of Brother Russell once in a while. I have heard them say these things. They are despising dominion; speaking evil of dignities. The Apostle has told us that in the last time there would be mockers, walking after their own ungodly lusts. "These be they that separate themselves." You know there is some separating going on. On this last trip I learned of some classes who are already divided, and others are dividing. They are sensual, not having the spirit. They had it once, possibly, but now they have lost it. These are following their own ungodly lusts, because they have lost the spirit.

The spirit of love is, primarily, the spirit of union, of oneness. It is interesting to look up the texts on oneness, unity, etc., in the Bible. The apostle speaks of the faithful ones endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit--that is, they strive to keep it. Some think it means, if there is a little friction between a brother and sister, that they must jump into the breach and right the wrong. Sometimes they work injury. I know of a brother who, living in a neighboring city, visited a class at another place, and he seemed to think he should right all the wrongs he saw there. He stirred up a great deal more of trouble than there was before. The Lord has not even appointed the Pilgrims to do this. I had two or three experiences where I tried to do that. Some think it is their special office as representatives of the Pastor to straighten out difficulties. Our special office is to preach the truth--the divine law. If we can give good advice in a talk, without being personal, that is properly our work. It is not our work as Pilgrims to do what we can to adjust these difficulties; it is not your work either. The best way to keep the unity of the spirit is to keep our own lives and example above reproach, and not be busybodying in other men's affairs, or in the affairs of other ecclesias.

In 2nd Peter 3: 3 and 4, we read, "Knowing this first that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, 'where is the promise of his coming.'" This indicates that there will be some who will doubt about the time features. Is any one in our little ecclesias saying, "Where is the promise of his coming?" I find that some are very doubtful about certain features of the truth, and consequently they stumble.

In Mal. 3:2 we read, "Who may abide the day of his coming; and who shall stand when he appeareth?" There is going to be an experience of testing--fiery trials of faith and

courage. The fire will manifest what spirit we are of. Some are murmuring, faultfinding, resenting, being offended at something the brethren do or say, or something the pilgrims or Brother Russell do or say. There are little surmisings, little roots of bitterness, until the Lord sifts them out. The Lord does it. Sometimes you and I have been interested specially in some of these, and have tried to help them back into the truth. I had such an experience.

I went to a brother four times in thirty days, and tried to get him to see the wrong of the course he was taking. Some things of the truth he did not agree with, and he came to disagree more and more. Kindly, and as lovingly as I could, I pointed out the situation to him. He treated me as kindly as he could, but he gave me to understand that I had said some unkind things to him. I said, "I have not said an unkind thing, but have merely tried to help you to see the matter rightly. I believe in separating from the class you are losing a blessing. I do not believe you can keep the truth and stay away." He said, "You are talking unkindly." I gave him the thought that the body is to be edified and built up by that which every joint supplieth. We cannot be edified by the class, nor can we edify the class, if we stay away. He said, "Brother, I never heard you say anything unkind to me before." Almost invariably you will find that you cannot help them. Why? They once had the spirit of oneness, but when they separate themselves, is that oneness? It is the spirit of separation. "They went out from us, because they were not of us. If they had been of us they doubtless would have continued with us." The Greek is very emphatic. If they had been of us they would not have separated.

How does the Lord supply strength? You are all familiar with the suggestion of the Apostle Paul in Eph., the 6th chapter. It is by putting on the whole armor of God. Notice, beginning at the 10th verse, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." What is strength? It is the knowledge, the truth, the understanding of God's plan, that gives confidence, assurance, and strength. It helps to give us courage and persistency. "Put on the whole armor of God." You girded the armor on a number of years ago, but there is still more to do. As we read from the Pastor and from the Volumes we buckle on the armor the tighter, that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. He has had wiles all through the age, but nothing compared with those that are coming.

In 2nd Thessalonians, speaking of the second coming of the Lord, the apostle describes it as coming with energetic manifestations by Satan, with lies and unrighteousness. He is going to use lies, and deceptions. He is not coming with hoofs, and horns, and a tail, but as an angel of light, specially at this time. We must gird on the whole armor to stand against these wiles of the devil in this evil day. That locates it at the present time. We not only have a great battle against our own flesh and blood; and that of our neighbors,

husbands, and wives, etc.; we wrestle not against these only, but against principalities and powers, and rulers of the darkness of the world (cosmos). We are living in the evil hour. While we must acknowledge that many of the imposing arrangements of the ' present time are good in some respects, we recognize that many of these imposing features are calculated to deceive, if possible, the very elect. A little farther on he has something lined up that he thinks will catch them all. When the federation is completed, and the thing looks so imposing, unless we are thoroughly protected with the armor, some of us will be led away. I have learned of some who have had the truth for many years, who have now gone back to Babylon, and placed their names on its roll. Deceptions are getting strong when they do that. I can see how one might desert the truth and go back to the world, but I cannot understand how they could go back there. Yet, the Scriptures intimate that some may do so. We are striving against the rulers of the darkness of this age. It is a time of darkness, and everything is intended to blind our eyes. Satan would be glad to get us mixed up with moral and other reform movements, and thus blind us to the study of the truth more and more. We are struggling against spiritual wickedness in high places. Satan has some high places; some exalted places. Some of his agents at the present time are cultured, and kindly, and benevolent. The more kindness, and benevolence, and suavity his representatives use, the better will it serve his purpose to deceive. It will tend to make us believe that possibly we have made a mistake in associating ourselves in opposition as we have.

It may appear that our time features did not come to pass. Seemingly we are left stranded, so far as our time features are concerned. Seemingly our work is going down. Have we made a mistake? Here is a little test. There may be an inclination not to be as energetic as in the past--a tendency to help the ruler of this world. Some are being tested along this line, and some are cooperating with the ruler of this present evil world. "Wherefore, take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand in this evil day; and having done all, to stand."

I am impressed with this text at the present time. "Having done all." My thought was in the past that the harvest work would go on accumulating and increasing, until a grand finale would be reached, and then it would go to smash all at once. It looks now as though the Lord would let it peter out, until we are stranded. "Having done all, stand." We could not stand a moment if we did not have the armor on. It is not long since seventy went out from the Bible House. I was down south at the time, and some preacher got hold of it almost as soon as I did. He said in the pulpit that Pastor Russell's friends were deserting him; that his prophecies did not come true, and therefore his friends would no longer furnish him money; they would not "feather his next longer." Suppose this sort of thing continues until there is no money to put out the Truth? What a test it would be. To simply stand, may be one of the final tests, for aught I know. (Do not say, Brother

Barber said it would be so. It may be.) Just keep in mind that you could not stand a moment if you did not have on the whole armor.

Now, one or two thoughts in conclusion. Some of the friends are losing their confident assurance, it seems to me. I just want to show how this manifests itself. My travels in the last six months have taken me through a number places where they have had the truth many years. Some who have been active in the classes, and some elders, I find, have moved two or three hundred miles away and gone in debt to buy farms. They are going so far away that they cannot maintain their fellowship with the friends. In some cases the class do not even hear from them. What does it mean? It looks to me as though they lack confidence. It looks as if they are ashamed of the Gospel which they once believed.

Some are stumbled because some prominent brother whom they loved, and upon whom they had built their faith, to some extent, has dropped out. What does it mean? They have not confident assurance. Confident assurance is built upon the truth--not on a brother.

Some are getting careless and indifferent respecting the Studies, respecting tract distribution, and attending the various meetings. It was very noticeable in connection with my last two trips, particularly the announcements for the public meetings. While we had quite a few public meetings, at only one place on our last trip did we have a well advertised public meeting. In some places they put up a little notice in the post office, with a little notice an inch and a half long in the newspaper. Then they complained because they could not get anybody out. They think the door is shut. At one place, I found they had secured the court house for a meeting at eight o'clock. I went down to the post office, and found they had expected to invite the people to the meeting that evening when they came to get their mail. The mail did not get in until 8:30. I made inquiries and learned that they had advertised in a good way formerly, but they found that not many came out, so they had dropped down to advertising in this way. It means loss of confidence.

Others get offended at the brethren, and stumble. They are looking at the flesh of the brethren, instead of viewing them as new creatures. Bro. R--d called attention to this matter of getting offended, and demanding apologies.

Then evil speaking, and evil surmising must be guarded against. We should not listen to evil speaking. The pilgrims have more of that to contend with than anyone else on earth. People think they should listen to all of their troubles, and so they come with reports about this and that. One came to me with Dr. Ross's pamphlet making an attack on Bro. Russell and the truth, and wanted me to explain. Others came with other matters like

this. Some are offended at Bro. Russell's teachings, and others are offended at the pilgrims. Satan has got in some false advertising in some way. I found a place where they take no part in tract distribution. I said to the brother, "If you believe the Society would give sanction to anything that is wrong, or if you think Bro. Russell would, or the pilgrims, the sooner you get out the better." We should have more confidence in one another. Inasmuch as you did this to another whom you are finding fault with, you did it unto the Lord Jesus.

Some are offended because they were not taken into the kingdom last October. They did not have enough confident assurance. We read in Psalm 119: 165, "Great peace have they who love thy law, and nothing shall offend them-" NOTHING shall offend them. In Matt. 26:31, Jesus said, "All ye shall be offended because of Me this night." Suppose there should be another similar experience just ahead of us, where all shall be offended because of our dear pastor, or something else? All this, we think, indicates a lack of confident assurance. The proper thing for us to do is to gird on the armor.

Let us give more diligence in the matter of study in attending the meetings, in loyalty to the brethren, in loyalty to class work, and in loving the Lord and one another. Let us remember that the way to do this is to study, and to endeavor to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace. Thus may we be able to stand faithful in the trials which the Lord may see fit to send upon us in the future. May the Lord bless us all.